CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	**Stockwater Spur Line**
Proposed Implementation Date:	July 15th, 2017
Proponent:	Rod Linhart
Location:	16N 16E Sections 5
County:	Fergus
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Rod Linhart has requested to install a spur line and stock tank off of an existing pipeline to improve grazing distribution. A new fence was installed on the north boundary and cut off cattle to the creek.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
Northeastern Land Office (NELO)
Rod Linhart

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

The DNRC, and NELO have jurisdiction over this proposed project.

DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this project

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant permission to install the stockwater pipelines and tanks.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant permission to install the stockwater pipelines and tank.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Ecological Site Name

Class: NRCS Rangeland Site
Aggregation Method: Dominant Condition
Tie-break Rule: Lower

Fergus County, Montana
Survey Area Version and Date: 15 - 09/11/2014

Map symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Map unit percent
127	Judith gravelly loam, 2 to 4 percent slopes	Draft Silty (Si) RRU 46-C 13-19" p.z.	90
153	Linwell-Winifred clay loams, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Clayey (Cy) RRU 46-C 10-14" p.z.	100
179	Norbert-Eltsac clays, 15 to 60 percent slopes	Draft Shallow Clay (SwC) RRU 46-C 13-19" p.z.	65
218	Tamaneen clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Clayey (Cy) RRU 46-C 10-14" p.z.	90

Erosion Hazard (Off-Road, Off-Trail)

Aggregation Method: Dominant Condition
Tie-break Rule: Higher

Fergus County, Montana
Survey Area Version and Date: 15 - 09/11/2014

Map symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Component name and % composition Rating reasons
127	Judith gravelly loam, 2 to 4 percent slopes	Slight	Judith 90% Windham 10%
153	Linwell-Winifred clay loams, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Slight	Linwell 50% Winifred 35% Gerber 15%
179	Norbert-Eltsac clays, 15 to 60 percent slopes	Severe	Norbert 65% Slope/erodibility Eltsac 25% Slope/erodibility
218	Tamaneen clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Slight	Tamaneen 90% Turner 10%

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- The will be some ground disturbance and bare ground created associated with the stockwater installation. The effect will be minimal and the bare ground should revegetate naturally within a few growing seasons. Areas extreme slopes should be avoided; if this is not possible then straw waddles or other water slowing features should be installed to mitigate the erosion potential. The Draft Shallow Ecosite is rated as "severe" due to erodibility and slope. The proposed pipeline location has a slope less than 15 percent so this should mitigate the severe erosion hazard.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

6. AIR QUALITY:
What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:
What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

Current plant community is native short grass/shrubs associated with draft shallow clay, draft silty, and clayey Eco sites.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- The will be some ground disturbance and bare ground created associated with the stockwater installation. These areas will be prone to noxious weed infestations. Frequent scouting should occur until revegetation has occurred to suppress noxious weed establishment. The pipeline scar will remain visible for many year, due to the disturbance.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:
Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program for Species of Concern with a state rank of 2 or higher was conducted in the township that includes the area of potential effect. (State rank of 3 means Potentially at risk because of **limited** and/or **declining** numbers, range and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas.)

Species of Concern
3 Species
Filtered by the following criteria:
Township = 016N016E [based on mapped Species Occurrences]

BIRDS (AVES) — 1 SPECIES — TOWNSHIP RANGE

SCIENTIFIC NAME / COMMON NAME / TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) / FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	FWP SWAP	% OF GLOBAL BREEDING RANGE IN MT	% OF MT THAT IS BREEDING RANGE	HABITAT
Anthus spragueii / Sprague's Pipit	*Motacillidae* / Pipits	G4	S3B			SENSITIVE	SGCN3	18%	67%	Grasslands

Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Divide, Fallon, Fergus, Gallatin, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Madison, Mccone, Meagher, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux

State Rank Reason: Although population trends in Montana appear to be relatively stable in recent years, populations have been in decline over the long run and the species faces threats from cover type conversion, overgrazing, exotic plant invasions, altered fire regimes, and mowing prior to fledging of young.

FISH (ACTINOPTERYGII) — 2 SPECIES — TOWNSHIP RANGE

SCIENTIFIC NAME / COMMON NAME / TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) / FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	FWP SWAP	% OF GLOBAL BREEDING RANGE IN MT	% OF MT THAT IS BREEDING RANGE	HABITAT
Chrosomus eos / Northern Redbelly Dace	*Cyprinidae* / Minnows	G5	S3				SGCN3	4%	27%	Small prairie rivers

Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Cascade, Chouteau, Daniels, Dawson, Fergus, Garfield, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Mccone, Meagher, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Richland, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux

Sander canadensis / Sauger	*Percidae* / Perches	G5	S2			SENSITIVE	SGCN2	1%	15%	Large prairie rivers

Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Big Horn, Blaine, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Garfield, Hill, Liberty, Mccone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Treasure, Valley, Wibaux, Yellowstone

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- Temporary displacement or incidental take may occur during construction of the Stockwater pipeline and tank. No population effect is anticipated.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). This entailed inspection of project maps, DNRC's sites/site leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I search revealed that *Antiquities* have not been identified in the APE. No additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed development. However, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials are identified during project related activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such resources can be made.

Alternative A (No Action) - No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) - No effect anticipated.

11. AESTHETICS:
Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:
Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:
List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

Alternative A (No Action)-No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:
Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:
Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:
Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:
Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:
List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:
Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:
Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:
Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	Brandon Sandau
	Title:	Land Use Specialist
Signature:		**Date**: January 11, 2017

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

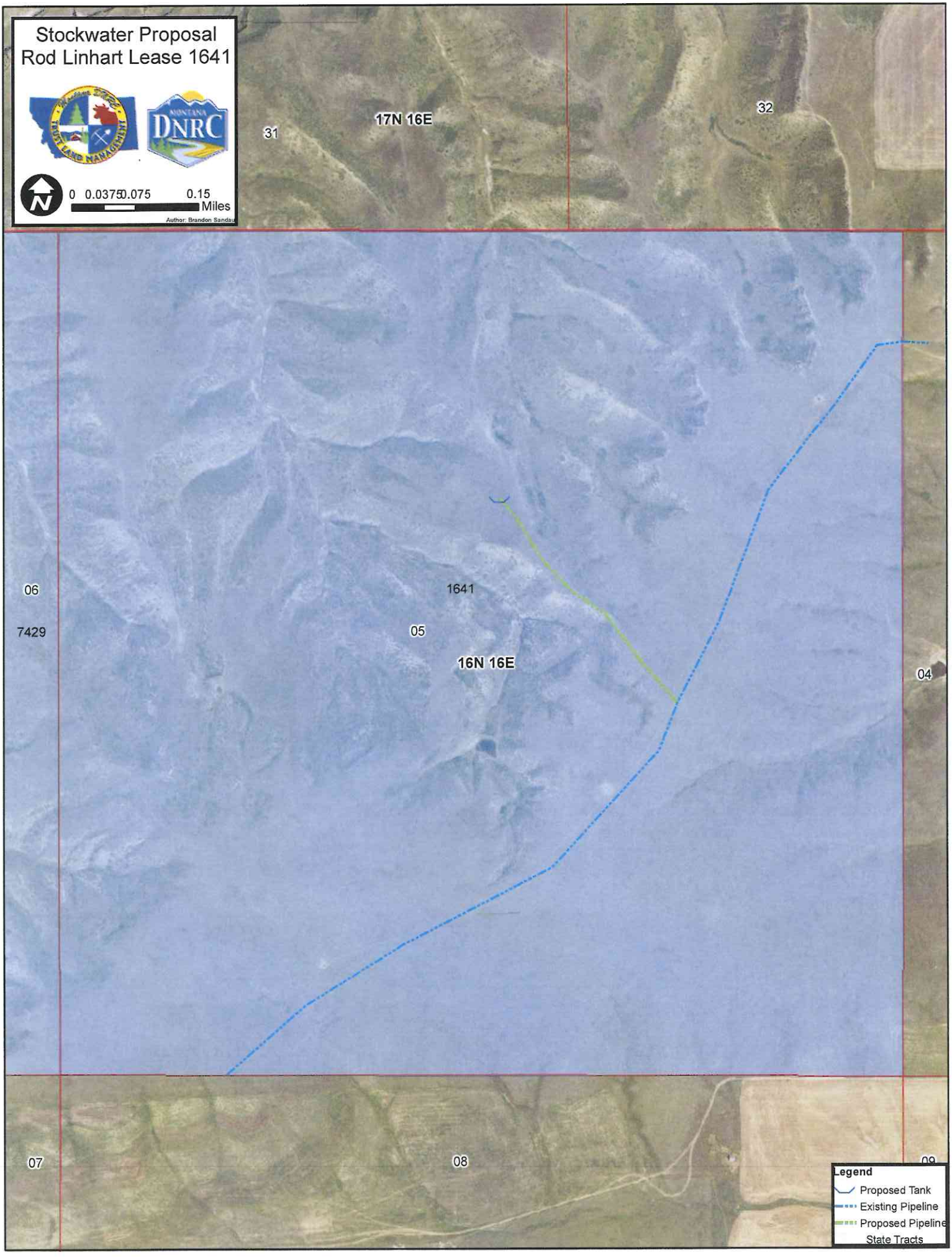
Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant permission to install the stockwater pipeline and tank.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS: Minimal impacts are expected.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

	EIS		More Detailed EA	XXX	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Barny D. Smith
	Title:	Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office
Signature:		**Date**: January 11, 2017


Stockwater Proposal
Rod Linhart Lease 1641
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Miles
Author: Brandon Sandau
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Legend
Proposed Tank
Existing Pipeline
Proposed Pipeline
State Tracts